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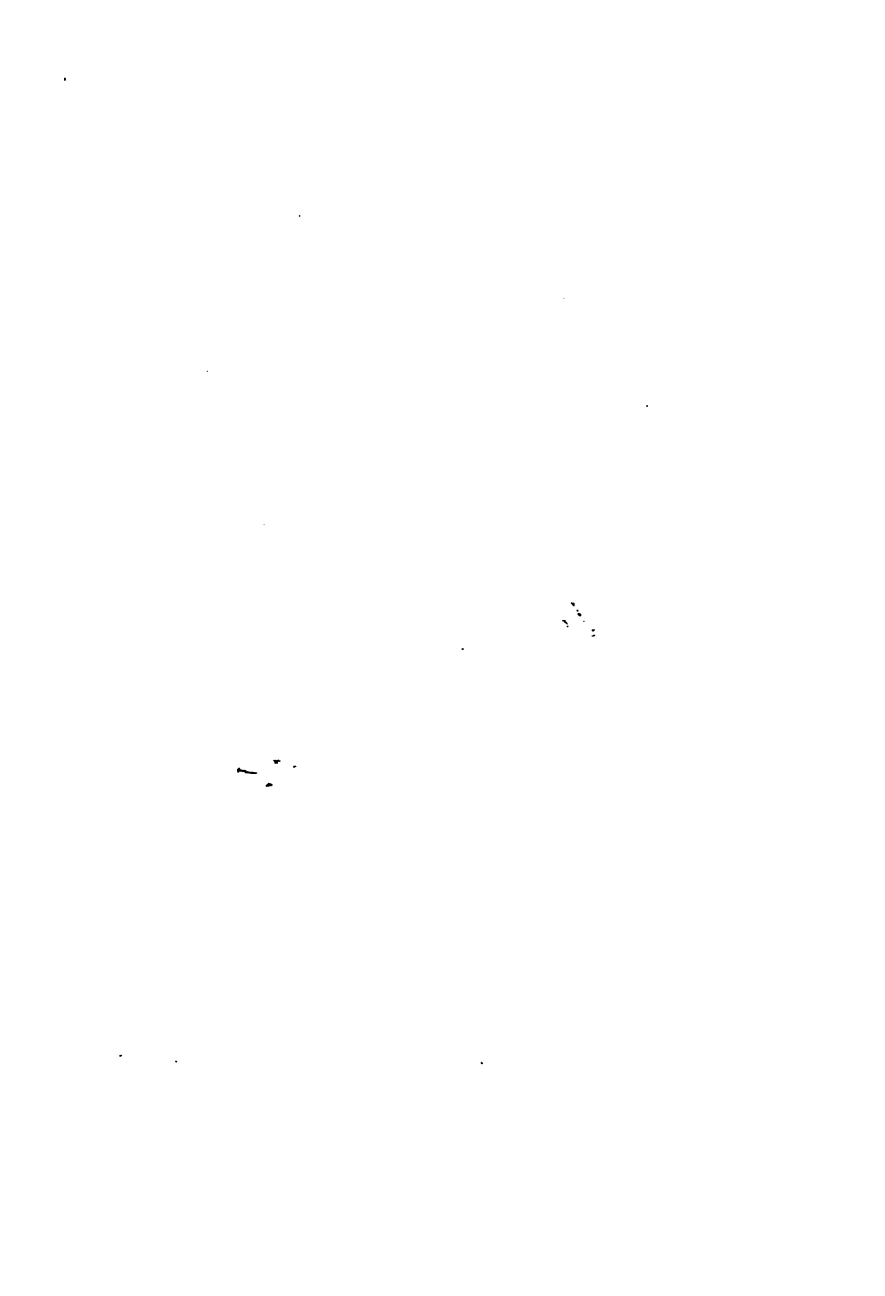
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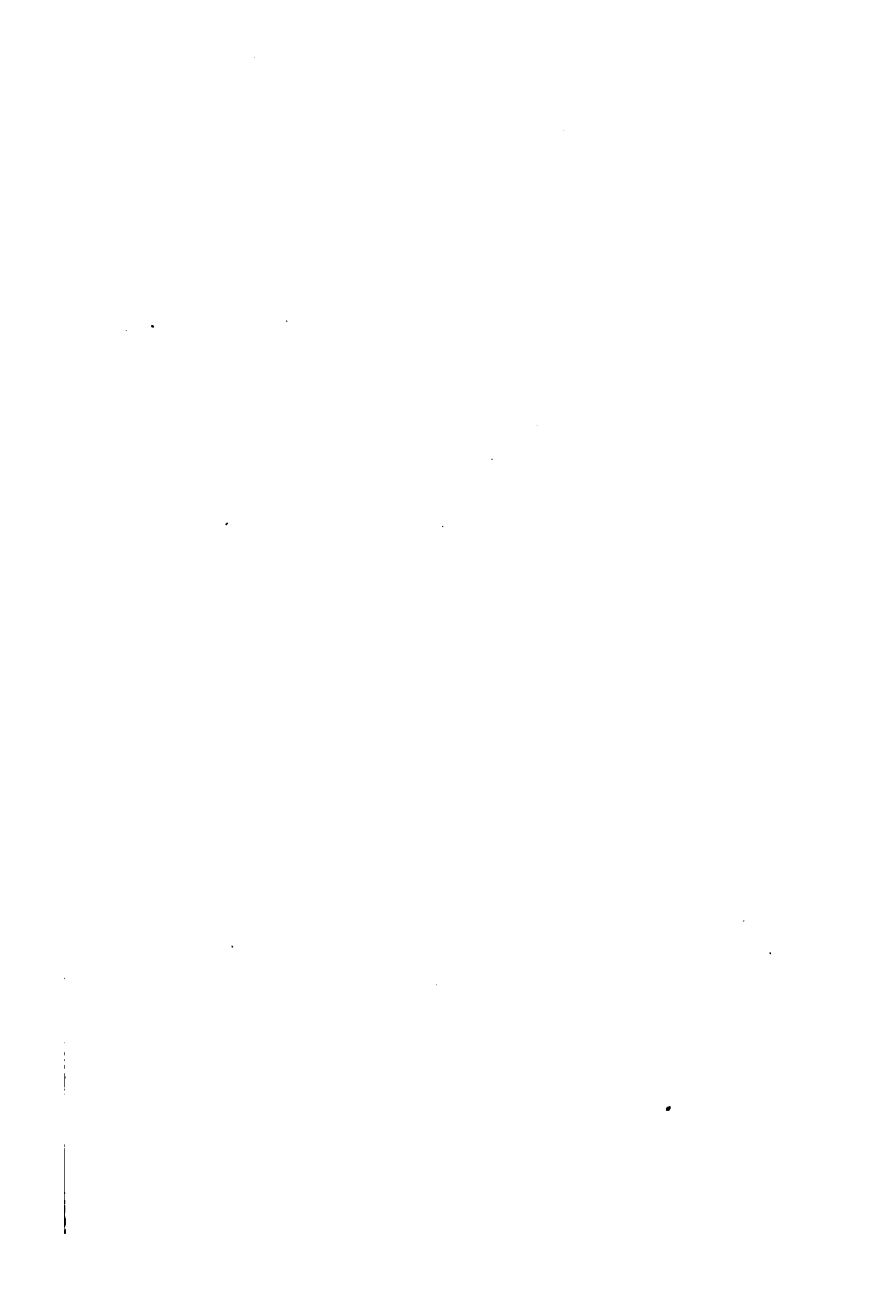
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INDIGESTION CURABLE;

A POPULAR TREATISE

ON

DERANGEMENT OF THE LIVER

AND

DIGESTIVE ORGANS.

BY

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THE announcement of a self-evident fact may appear unnecessary—and an endeavour, by writing a work, to impress that fact on the mind of the world, seem a work of supererogation; but it is certain, that the most distinctly-established truths are daily practically denied, and it therefore becomes necessary to arouse a sense of their existence, by setting them again and again before our imagination.

Thus the title of this work, and the fact it is intended to inculcate, “that indigestion is really to be *cured*,” though it may appear, *prima facie*, an absurdity; yet the number of persons suffering under, and the infinitude of remedies daily offered to them for, this disease, sufficiently show the possibility of something yet remaining to be done towards persuading the world that this most distressing complaint, with all its attendant disagreeables, is as easily (if the patient himself be willing) to be cured as a broken arm, or any similar derangement of the body.

As the mariner, guiding his vessel through a well-known sea, will occasionally fall in with previously undescribed shoals or rocks ; and as the ploughman, while turning up merely the surface of a field which has been repeatedly undergoing the same process for years, will occasionally discover the long-buried sacred urn or the ancient coin ; so the writer upon a supposed worn-out subject, may succeed in detecting errors, and discovering remedies, in a system previously supposed to be perfection. To no science will this observation apply more strongly than to the Medical Profession in all its branches : and while the Anatomist may, and does, so accurately describe the operation of the system necessary to support that most stupendous proof of the Almighty power of the Great First Cause—the human body ; still derangements of that body are every day occurring, which his utmost skill fails in regulating ; and the patient dies, in full opposition to the opinion of his medical adviser, that, according to all established rules, he had no business to die at all.

In this state of science then, generally, I trust I shall not be thought guilty of undue presumption if, in the few following pages, I endeavour to trace out to the world of patients suffering under the previously mentioned disorder, a course of

treatment which, in my humble opinion, will tend greatly to their benefit. I do not presume to suggest anything to the medical world; my ambition is not sufficiently great to carry me on to ground which has been previously trodden by men whose attainments and reputation placed them deservedly in the highest ranks of their profession. I write for the world at large, and therefore divest myself as much as possible of professional terms, called (in my opinion, justly,) by a powerful periodical of the day, "medical jargon;" and shall endeavour to convey my ideas in the form most likely to be understood by those interested in the directions offered for the management of themselves generally, independent of that medical assistance which, at the outset, will be necessary to every one.

In this short treatise, which is meant as a kind of "Everybody's Book," it is not intended to go very deeply into the description of the malady, but merely to afford an outline of it, and suggest such treatment as I have found, in the course of my practice, almost always successful.

CHAPTER II.

INDIGESTION.

This is one of what I call "walk-about diseases," in which the patient rarely takes to his bed, but carries his disorder about him, buttoned under his waistcoat, hugging, as it were, an insinuating foe, which is, like the Promethean Vulture, gnawing at his liver, without the chance that Prometheus had, of the liver growing again. He goes through symptoms of heartburn—headache—dizziness—dimness of sight,—irregular actions of the bowels—disagreeable taste in the mouth—dreadful pain in the stomach after eating,—and indeed all those accompanying sensations which are "too well known to require further description." The reader of this will most probably have experienced some of these sensations at one time or other, and will in that case readily recognize them. This all proceeds from irregular action of the liver, generally from torpor of that organ, but sometimes from the remains of inflammation which has been checked, not perfectly destroyed, and becoming chronic, or con-

tinuous, in time produces obstruction of the circulation necessary to support the liver in the discharge of its functions, gradual decay of that organ, and eventually death. This is not the work of a week, a month, or a year; sometimes it will be several years before the unfortunate patient dies. But what a life of torture to lead! Surely death itself would be preferable at once, to carrying about an insidious disease, destroying one's very vitals, none the less dangerous because it works on its slow but certain course, without causing any degree of pain, except occasionally a memento as if a knife were running into one's side. The above picture is by no means over-drawn.

How often do I see people in my daily walks, or evening "*reunions*," carrying death in their looks: they are as clearly, to the medical observer, marked out, as if the fact were written on their forehead. If a friend asks them what is the matter, they will tell him what they suffer, with a sort of "*nonchalance*," which sufficiently evinces their ignorance of the destructiveness of the disease under which they are slowly, but certainly, sinking. They will complain "of not being able to eat, drink, or sleep, as they formerly did; but they have at last, after trying all but everything, had a prescription given them by a

friend which will set them quite on their legs again." Or if this should not be the case, and they have no new remedy, have worn out or got tired of the old ones, they will say, "what can you recommend?"—and gladly jump at the opportunity of trying somebody's "Pills," which have done the recommender "most essential service," the said Pills being the recommender's last new remedy for himself—and which, in its turn, will be worn out and thrown aside like its predecessors. It is most extraordinary the inclination persons have to endeavour to repair the breaches made in the constitution of their friends. Hear any one in company mention some little thing he is himself suffering under, or some member of his family, and he will have at least half as many remedies offered for it as there are individuals present, all of them the best things in the world, though completely at variance with each other, and as contrary in their effect as acids and alkalies. This excess of benevolence has, I verily believe, (could the truth be got at,) been the cause of no small number of well-intentioned murders, perfectly innocent, but none the less effectual.

By the way, these "Bilious remedies" are always Pills, to be taken from one up to a hundred, according to the conscience, forsooth, of the

proprietors, to cure a disordered and often diseased liver. Ridiculous infatuation! miserable delusion! When will the world be convinced of the wisdom of applying only to those who at least have a view in what they prescribe, of endeavouring to apply certain remedies to certain cases; instead of being guilty of the folly of running after any thing that is advertised as "Infallible," or "Doctoring themselves,"—to death generally. No proverb is more true than the old one of "the man who is his own physician generally getting a fool for his patient." No man, in worldly affairs, it is said, can be a good judge in his own cause; and altering the word *cause* for *case*, it is applicable in a medical sense.

I have sat boiling over with indignation at hearing (myself unknown,) the ridiculous and absurd remedies recommended for this and that disease, and the old cant of "Buy a box of such Pills," (oh! these everlasting Pills!) "you may get them for so much, and you would pay a Doctor ten times more, without getting one-tenth part of the good." But so it is, and eventually we are gainers by it—for they all must come to us at last; not so much, perhaps, to get relief from their first disorder—for then, probably, it did not amount to disease; but to complain of something much more serious, arising from the

very remedy they have been using so injudiciously; and often have I traced a very dangerous attack to such a source, which has lasted the Patient for months, and caused him to expend ten times the money—ten times did I say? a guinea would probably have cured him at the outset, and it will very often require far more than ten to eradicate the mischief caused by his own or his friend's cleverness. The profession has no better friend in a family than a copy of Buchan's or some other "Domestic Medicine," accompanied by a well-stored Medicine Chest.

I once witnessed a most lamentable case of this self-prescribing practice, in the person of a beautiful girl of nineteen. She had come to London from France with her father for a few days; and feeling what she described as a pain in the stomach, sent for some Tincture of Rhubarb, which momentarily relieved her: on its recurring, which it did the following day, she took some more, with apparently similar success. She returned home poorly, and with occasional flying pains about the region of the stomach and bowels; her mother, who, from the slightness of the symptoms, thought no great deal of it, merely prescribed some family medicine; however, she still continued to get worse, lost flesh, appetite, good looks, till in fact she had nothing left but

her life to lose. Advice, at length, was called in—but too late—the mischief was done—the chronic had succeeded the acute inflammatory action, and she fell a victim to a puzzling case, which excited great difference between the medical men, it having almost the appearance of consumption, but without its more decisive symptoms. On her death-bed she expressed her wish to be opened, knowing the doubts which existed. I was present at the examination, and the inference drawn by the surgeons was, that the pain she originally experienced was Inflammation of the Liver, which the tincture of rhubarb had merely allayed; it eventually assumed the chronic form, and gradually spread over the whole of the inside. The bowels were perfectly black, though the examination took place only a few hours after death! the liver adhered so strongly to the side, and was so much decayed, that in attempting to separate it, it tore like a piece of tinder. The whole of the *peritonæum*, near the ribs, was strongly attached to the sides; and the wonder was how she could have suffered so little pain, with her viscera in such a state. The lungs were but slightly affected by the surrounding inflammation, and the heart perfectly healthy. It had been supposed that her brain was diseased, as she had been delirious for some time; but it was

not in the least deranged, nor was there any extravasation. Such was one case out of thousands, where the patient was lost from not having recourse to medical aid at the outset; for, in all probability, some active treatment at first would at once have quelled the inflammation, and the poor sufferer lived still to grace the circle in which she moved.

And I would here offer a word of counsel as to the family manner of treating

PAINS IN THE STOMACH AND BOWELS.

Nothing is more common than to give this said tincture of rhubarb, or brandy, or some ardent spirit, and nothing can be more dangerous. In the absence of medical advice, if any thing be given, let it be a purgative without a particle of spirit. The powder of rhubarb, conjoined with a little carbonate of soda, is a perfectly safe remedy, and can never do harm. In cases of supposed cramp, too, it is common to administer brandy, ginger, &c.—it is madness. Repeated draughts of water, as hot as possible, if it be really *cramp*, will generally produce relief; and if this fail, get a medical adviser as quick as possible, keeping hot flannel to the surface of the pain till he arrives. The effect of stimulants, in case the supposed cramp should be inflammation,

has been pretty well shown in the above case, even where it was originally only slight; where severe, mortification and death run more than an even chance with a cure. But enough of this digression: let me return to my subject.

The parties suffering under this Promethean torture, are, generally speaking, themselves most in fault for the retardation, if not for the prevention of the cure altogether. I am not here pretending that every disease is capable of being cured; but I know, as does every one else, that people may be cured often, yet die but once; and when I say the blame is with themselves oftener than not, I mean that by merely going to a medical adviser, getting his prescription or medicine, taking it till they find themselves a little better, and then desisting for want of perseverance in its continuance, I say that this is the foundation of the "walk-about diseases" we are constantly meeting with.

This is what I wish, in this little treatise, to show the fallacy of, viz:—

PALLIATION WITHOUT CURE.

And herein lies the mischief of much of the medical practice of the present day. Medical men, knowing the dislike of their patients to long treatment, are compelled to prescribe something

which they know will afford immediate relief—*relief*, mind.

To take three cases as examples, viz:—

1. Acidity of stomach.
2. Indigestion.
3. Costiveness.

For the first, they prescribe, generally, some alkali; probably carbonated soda; and nothing can be more instantaneously efficacious; but then it is merely temporary. The existing cause still remains unattacked, the irregular action of the liver remains unchecked, and the disease merely palliated.

Secondly, In cases where the dreadful pains of indigestion are experienced after eating, it is not an uncommon thing to prescribe stimulants to excite the action of the stomach; such for instance as rhubarb and ginger, rhubarb and cayenne pepper, or, what amounts to the same thing, powdered capsicums. The excitation is certainly effected, and for the moment relief obtained; but this must be repeated daily, and as the stomach gets accustomed to the stimulus the dose must be increased, till the organ is reduced to that artificial state as never to act of itself, but require the constant and unceasing excitation of these “palliative stimuli.”

Thirdly, Irregular action of the bowels. A

patient applies to a medical man, and complains of costiveness, more or less continual. What is the usual remedy? In all probability, an aloetic purgative, to be taken as "occasion requires." That is, the bowels, previously indisposed to act, are confirmed by the use of these "peristaltic persuaders" so strongly in that disposition, that the patient must take his pills or potions as regularly as his daily meals. So much for the negative good, producing a positive increase of the derangements in the system it professes to relieve.

CASE.

I was once consulted on the continent by an English Baronet, whose countenance sufficiently indicated considerable derangement of the bilious system. It was what the French so well express by the word *Jaunatre*—a truly bilious yellow. He told me that for the preceding four years, he had no action on the bowels without the aid of medicine; and his system had become so habituated to this false and erroneous treatment, that, notwithstanding he rung the changes on all the purgative remedies, he was compelled to take such enormous doses, that his existence was miserable. The origin of the disorder, like many others of this stamp, was in irregular living, and he had recourse to the usual palliative remedies

for relieving sick head-aches, nausea, and the remaining consequences of too frequent indulgence in the pleasures of the table. This was apparently a desperate case to cure. I stated my opinion, which was, that I considered it by no means difficult to cure him, but it would require great self-denial and perseverance on his part; such, indeed, that I was afraid he would not go on with it a week, but if he could make up his mind to try it, I would engage to say in three months he should be very much better, if not quite restored; my own conviction at the time being, that his recovery was certain within two months: my hopes were verified, for in that time he had recovered his healthy countenance, and gave up medicine altogether: I saw him two years afterwards, and he continued well. The mode of treatment adopted was nothing extraordinary: I endeavoured, by tonics, combined with saline aperients, to give general strength to the system, and laid down very severe rules for diet and exercise: he luckily had resolution to persevere, and reaped the benefit of so doing, in his restored health.

Here was a case where the patient had been palliating for six years; in the first two he succeeded in bringing himself into the state in which he applied to me. In two months, by adopting

a curative system, he obtained that recovery which he had long utterly despaired of. Can any thing more clearly show the folly of "palliation?" but how few there are who possess the above perseverance! no,—they must be relieved at once, and relieved they are,—till cure becomes more and more distant, and they often get at least a most effectual one, viz. *Death*,—fully qualified to sport on their tombs that most original epitaph—"Afflictions sore long time I bore."

CHAPTER III.

But to return to our subject: the antacids generally resorted to in cases of acidity of stomach, better known, perhaps, as heartburn, are alkaline salts and earths. Now let us examine the effect of these "palliatives."

First of all, alkaline salts often affect the kidneys, and produce an increased discharge of urine, thus attacking a part previously healthy, and by exciting undue influence in that part, of course weaken its natural powers, so that the constant use of them not only confirms, as I have said before, the disposition to acidity of stomach, but will eventually produce torpor in

the urinary organs. The kidneys, accustomed to this adventitious aid, follow the general rule of nature, and gradually become unable to perform their functions without it: inaction follows—then obstruction; the fluid which they ought to secrete, collects about, and presses on the surrounding parts, the pressure excites irritation and inflammation, which last may, perhaps, attack the bladder, eventually producing retention of urine, and the patient will die,—no, not die,—but live for an uncertain time in dreadful torture, when on a sudden, the pain will cease, and he will be comparatively in heaven; and let us hope that what he feels may be a foretaste of that celestial abode, for it is his death-warrant. The cessation of pain proves the commencement of mortification, and he sinks gradually, but quickly, till death finishes the business, and cures him most effectually of “the heartburn.” Here is a possible, nay, a probable case; many such I have no doubt are met with, which, if we could get at their origin, would prove very similar.

I will now consider the effect produced on the system, by what are known to the medical world as

ABSORBENTS.

Nothing is more common than to administer them in cases of acidity of stomach; and those

most in use are Chalk and Magnesia; to begin with

CHALK,

which is the base of most of the lozenges sold for the relief of heartburn, and they do afford generally immediate relief, by acting in the same manner as the carbonate of soda, or any alkaline salts, by neutralizing the acid they unite with in the stomach.

So far so good; and persons suffering under this inconvenient sensation, which, at its commencement, is apparently nothing more than an "inconvenience," think they have discovered something very little short of the philosopher's stone, on finding the immediate relief they obtain from these lozenges, and therefore are always careful to have some in their pocket.

Heartburn is frequently suffered under and not known to be so. I remember on a voyage home from India, we had a passenger on board who was returning to Europe, in search of a new liver, or at least to get his old one thoroughly repaired and renovated. We took him on board at the Isle of France, where he had been staying some time; but though they are celebrated there for repairing ships, which very often stand in no great need of reparation, they could not succeed in repairing his liver, which did. He came to us

with stores of medicine, and lots of dietetic directions, and was evidently not disposed to trouble me with his case. Some very bad weather we experienced made him dreadfully sea-sick; and the straining, after his stomach was empty, brought his liver so much into action, that when he had recovered from this "*mal de mer*," he was like a new man, and all he had to complain of, at the end of three weeks, was what he called a "pricking sensation in his throat." I heard him day after day singing the same tune about his throat, knowing perfectly well what it was, and calculating that whenever he did apply to me, I should be considered something extraordinary from the instantaneous relief he would receive. I never of course noticed it to him, having always found that medical advice, like any other, is never thought much of when given unsought. At length I was sent for into his cabin, listened to a history of his sufferings very attentively, and promised to administer a draught which would be of service. I gave him thirty drops of a liquid alkali, and in a minute he was relieved—from what? why from heartburn—for this was what he was suffering under, without knowing it. I afterwards put him under a course of treatment, which, before he landed, had completely relieved him from any visit of his old

annoyance, while he was with us: the first resource being "Palliation," the second, an attempt at "Cure," which succeeded. My motive for digression is this: I am certain there are many persons who are subject to this inconvenience, without knowing what it is, its effect being felt only in the throat, causing a slight degree of heat, but more decidedly indicated by a sensation, as if needles, in no small number, were being struck into the windpipe: they naturally enough supposing it to be a common sore throat, have recourse to some gargle, very often containing an acid, infusion of roses for instance, some little of which will slip down, and adding fuel to fire make matters worse, in consequence of treating as one disease what is only a symptom of another; one more instance of the folly of self-treatment. Whence arose the name of heartburn, I am at a loss to imagine, for the heart has no more to do with it than the great toe. This sensation, then, in the throat, is what is erroneously called, but generally known as heartburn, and those who experience it may learn that it is one of the first symptoms of some irregular action of the digestive organs, which, if not attended to in time, will eventually lead to much inconvenience, if not to serious consequences. Having now explained what the leading and most prominent symp

tom is of "heartburn," or acidity of stomach, I will recur to the use of chalk.

Chalk is a natural combination of carbonic acid and lime. The lime has a greater affinity for the peculiar acid contained in the stomach than it has for the carbonic acid; a chemical decomposition therefore takes place on the concurrence of these three; the lime leaves the carbonic to unite itself with the gastric or stomach acid, till the whole of this last is neutralized, and the portion of carbonic acid set at liberty, by the decomposition from its old companion the lime, is thrown off the stomach generally by eructations, or, to use the word which every body will understand, and therefore etymologically speaking, strictly "vulgar," by "belching:" the sufferer is relieved instantaneously, and happy enough he is; but let us follow out the effect of the chalk, or carbonate of lime.

I have said above, "till the whole of the last is neutralized." Now, till this is done, the relief is not effected; of course, then, enough chalk will be taken to promote the desired end, and even go beyond it; that is, more will be taken than the stomach stands in need of, and this surplus will remain nothing more or less than "CHALK."

Let us now examine the effect of this substance. The heartburn is gone—fairly beaten

out of the field, by as powerful and effective an ally as could have been called in. Our ally has lost part of his force in the action—but will the remainder, the original object attained, be withdrawn? No, it will be left in the field to work, eventually, far more mischief to those who call it in, than the original annoyance could have done, if more judgment had been used in the selection of that ally.

The remaining chalk, then, is left to exercise its natural influence on the system. What is that influence? A most powerfully astringent one. The usual remedy in common diarrhœa, or purging, after removing, by aperients, the cause of the disease, is chalk. There is not even a farmer in the country, however uneducated he may be, who does not know that calves, which are extremely liable to relaxation of bowels, with them termed “scouring,” are always provided with abundance of chalk, which they are constantly licking, and thus counteracting the effect of their usual diet—milk. I merely mention this fact to prove how generally well known are the astringent effects of chalk, when every illiterate manager of a farmer’s cow-house is so well acquainted with them. Now wherever there is continually-recurring heartburn, there is generally irregularity of bowels; perhaps, at first, it may

be relaxation—but more is to be feared from the succeeding costiveness—that is, supposing no remedy were employed. Here, then, to relieve the heartburn, persons adopt a medicine, which, by its constant use, will bring the bowels into such a state that they will never be regular without the aid of purgatives: and so they go on, ringing the changes upon astringents for the heartburn, and aperients for confined bowels, till, what with one and the other, they live upon medicine, a burthen to themselves, and a misery to all around them. Perhaps I have not made myself sufficiently clear as to the action produced by the administration of chalk, and its consequent decomposition in the stomach. As my object is to be understood by every body, I will exemplify it. Squeeze the juice of a lemon into a wine-glass, and, having taken out the pips which may have fallen in, reduce some chalk to powder by means of pressure with a tea-spoon, and drop a very little of it into the glass: a violent commotion will take place, when, in a little time, the liquor will become clear, the lemon, or citric acid, having dissolved the lime, and thrown off the carbonic acid; repeat this addition of the chalk till the effervescence ceases; the acid is now saturated, and all the chalk you may put in afterwards will fall to the bottom, and remain unchanged. This

is the exact manner in which the gastric acid acts on the chalk when received into the stomach.

In this palliative treatment of the heartburn, then, we see the foundation of most extensive mischief laid by the use of chalk. I will here relate a case which occurred to my knowledge, in the person of a chemist and druggist, residing in London, showing the mischief actually produced by its injudicious use. He was suffering occasionally from relaxation of the bowels, accompanied by constant heartburn; and fancying he knew enough of medicine to treat himself, had recourse, from time to time, to such correctives as he found temporarily relieved him. After continuing two or three months in that way, he was attacked by violent pain across the bottom of the back, which he considered to be lumbago. He applied stimulating liniments, and used a hot bath, which relieved him while in it, but the pain returned with greater violence when he came out; this went on for thirty-six hours, his pain still increasing. He then sent for a friend, a surgeon-apothecary, described his symptoms, and took some remedy, as for a smart attack of rheumatism. Next morning, no better; sent for another friend, a consulting surgeon of some eminence, told him the history of the case, and what had been done. This friend declared that rheumatism, or lumbago,

had no hand in the business, and from certain symptoms, gave his opinion it was inflammation of the kidneys, the pain having now settled on the right side, just behind and above the hip bone. Cupping was directed—hot bath again, and relief thus gained for an hour, with a more violent recurrence afterwards. He went on for two days longer, no better—if anything, worse. I need not say that, by this time, a considerable degree of fever existed; he became delirious, and his mother sent to another friend, a physician of long standing. Hearing the details of the case, he wished for a consultation, which was held, the patient at the time being greatly reduced, still in extreme pain, but now perfectly collected. The case was detailed, he was examined, but nothing could be seen—the surface of the pain was only tender on pressure; and the only conclusion they could come to was, that it was a puzzling case. The physician, however, said, as the other two had not been successful at hitting it, he would act on an idea which struck him; viz. that there was a lodgment of matter in the colon, or largest of the bowels. He ordered injections to be thrown up three times a day, as hot as the patient could bear them, in order, if possible, to dislodge the hardened substance he expected to find—and he was right; the second

injection commenced the business, relieved the pain; the patient, after being in agony for several days, found himself, as it were in heaven; a few more injections relieved him from an immense quantity of hard matter that had collected and indurated in the colon, and nothing remained for him but to recover strength. It was, from the time of his attack, thirteen weeks before he was able to resume his avocations. After the discovery of the actual cause of his illness, the question naturally recurred as to the cause of this "indurated collection." A little reflection soon brought the matter to light. I have said he had been treating himself for relaxed bowels. What had he taken?—why, chalk; chalk mixture and laudanum: and smartly was he punished for his folly. This was "palliation" with a witness—a proper treatment at first, viz. a smart dose of rhubarb and calomel—and *afterwards* this chalk mixture would have set him up; but by leaving the cause of the relaxation untouched, and resorting to palliative remedies he confirmed the disease, and eventually was brought to such a state, that his apothecary, on being called to him one night, considered that, in half an hour, it would be all over with him—and he had only his good constitution to thank for his recovery.

Here too was a case where the patient might

have been supposed to know something of medicine, and with very good reason; in fact, the idea of a chemist and druggist applying for advice in a common bowel complaint, would, "*prima facie*," appear rather ridiculous. I would certainly myself say so. This "bowel complaint" was recurring frequently—and therefore it should have been evident to himself, had he reflected on it, that it was not a "common" derangement. Had he consulted any medical friend, he would have been advised to take, immediately, some smart aperient medicine. "What!" I fancy I hear many persons exclaim, "take an aperient when the bowels are already so unusually relaxed?" Verily, and in good truth, I answer, "Yes." I doubt not but that those who exclaim in this manner, would much rather prefer a basin of arrow-root, with a little brandy and nutmeg in it, or a "good stiff glass" of brandy and water, with a tea-spoonful of ginger, or some of the aforesaid nutmeg, to comfort the bowels, or "to settle" the stomach; and, upon my life, their choice, as a matter of flavor, is not to be despised; but as to their judgment, or rather their want of it, what shall I say of that?

Suppose, for instance, a narrow stream quietly meandering through a country, with delightful flowery meadows on its banks, and all around

smiling in vernal beauty: on a sudden, without any apparent cause, the banks, where they are rather low, give way, and the surrounding pastures are laid under water; the grazier, or farmer, sees the devastation, sets to work to mend and heighten the banks, and, for a time, remedies the mischief: in a few days, however, the water again overflows, and the same devastation befalls the lands adjacent. "Well," says the farmer, "we did not make these banks high enough; the devil's in the stream!—what can it mean?" I think I now hear some sly old fellow say to him—"Sir, excuse me, but it is useless building up banks in my opinion; for as the stream has always been a very quiet one, at any rate in fine weather like this, it strikes me there must be some obstruction lower down, or we should never have the water all over the country in this way; I'll just go a mile or so down the current and examine." Away he starts, and, after a wind or two, he finds a large tree, which the course of the river had gradually undermined, fallen right across the stream. Here he has at once the cause of the overflow;—this tree has formed a dam, which every day is getting more formidable, by collecting whatever floats down to it, and the water rising to an unnatural height, breaks down the bank at its weakest point. On this being reported to the

farmer, what does he do—go on banking still higher? I should think not, indeed!—he sends and removes the tree, the cause of all the mischief, and the water very quickly takes to its old channel, and goes on smoothly and regularly as before. This “*simile*” is strictly applicable to all cases of bilious derangement, which always arises from some obstruction or irregular secretion, causing an overflow above the barrier or below it, according to circumstances; and till this exciting cause is removed, no cure can be hoped for.

Thus, in the case I have been quoting, it is useless raising the banks and checking the overflow, whether by chalk, arrow-root, or brandy; the “tree,” the “cause,” must be first removed; and this is to be done by an effective aperient. But “a little learning is a dangerous thing;” and in medicine this is particularly applicable, as it will so often lead persons to treat consequences instead of causes: indeed the most clever physicians are sometimes mistaken in this way; and if they are deceived in symptoms, how much more likely are persons knowing little or nothing of disease to do mischief, by “raising the bank,” instead of “removing the tree.” Physic is a dark room at all times; disease is as different with different persons, according to constitution, as the human physiognomy. A man may break

his leg, and the surgeon will set him up again in a time which he can generally judge of pretty nearly, according to the extent of the mischief; but let him get the rheumatism in the same limb, and the case is totally different. A physician works in the dark, comparatively. By-the-bye, the French word "*physicien*" which one might suppose analogous to our word "physician," means a conjuror; their word for physician is "*medecin*." It appears they consider a "*physicien*," and a "*medecin*," by no means synonymous; and I strongly suspect that there may be some of our M. D.'s, even from Oxford and Cambridge, who, having described themselves in their passport, obtained in London, as "physicians," on the word being transcribed into the French one they would get at Calais or Boulogne, would figure as "conjurors," without the most remote claim to the title. Joking apart, a physician had need almost be a magician—for symptoms vary so much in the same disease, according to the temperament of the patient, that the wonder is they are not deceived oftener. A man may, by practice, become a very good surgeon, with a moderate share of ability—but to be really a good physician is not so easily attainable. Some persons may here say, "Why does he not tell us what we should take, in the absence of a medical adviser, in case

of a bowel attack? He writes as if everybody lived, like himself, in a town; but here are we four or five miles from a doctor, and he, perhaps, gone out when we want him." In this instance, I will suggest what might be done—supposing that all persons that are thus situated will find, in their own house, or in some good neighbour's, who is the Lady Bountiful of the village, a medicine chest.

Take

Calomel, five grains.

Make it into a syrup in a tea-spoon, with a little sugar and water, and swallow it.

In two hours after, take the following draught:

Powdered rhubarb, fifteen grains;

Epsom Salts, one drachm;

Laudanum, ten drops;

Water, two table-spoonsful.

Mix together.

By the time this has operated, or ought to have done so, the doctor will, most likely, be found—and he will judge whether the case is such that astringents may be necessary; but in nine cases out of ten they will not be wanting, for if there is no pain or uneasiness left after this medicine has acted well on the bowels, and the stomach feels "sinking," even I shall not object to a little arrow-

root to comfort, or a little brandy and water to settle it. Should, however, the derangement return, hesitate not one instant to call in medical advice.

I am, generally a decided enemy to publishing prescriptions, as they tend so extensively to self-treatment—that inexhaustible source of mischief to the patient. I hope, however, and feel pretty well assured, that what I have written above can only be resorted to with good effect; for should the pain and uneasiness continue, the first step will have been taken which every medical man would order. Do not let it be thought, that for the least derangement of bowels I am for dragging in a medical adviser by the head and shoulders; it is only where the complaint is attended with violent pain, or continues to return at intervals of two or three days, that the patient may be certain that more irregularity exists than he is aware of; and in this case it is that I would say, “Get advice in time.” Heartburn may be induced by eating acid fruit, or some such adventitious cause; but this is not the heartburn I am and have been alluding to—the first will cease, generally, on drinking a tumbler of warm water, which, diluting the contents of the stomach, will weaken the power of the acid; but the constantly-recurring heartburn, caused by bilious derangement, is that

in which I should repeat, "Get advice in time"—and judge for yourself whether the advice you do get is palliative or curative. If it should be the former, reject it—for you are better suffering under one disease, than, by endeavouring to palliate that one, inducing a second. A bilious derangement, however slight, is not to be got rid of in a week,—nor to be put to flight by a box of pills, composed of blue pill, or calomel, extract of colocynth, which contains aloes, and some slight narcotic. Be assured, if this is the advice you get, you will get something else—you will get worse; for though temporary relief may be gained, the enemy will return with double force ere long—and at each return, it will become more difficult to dislodge him.

Another remedy resorted to by patients suffering from acidity of stomach, is also an alkaline earth, namely,

MAGNESIA.

No medicine has, in its day, had a greater run, than Henry's Magnesia—in itself a most elegant and pure preparation; indeed, I believe at present, it is in very great repute—at least I know it is in France and on the European Continent. This medicine is, in itself, a most valuable remedy, though not a bit better than what is sold at Apothecaries' Hall, and many of the more res-

pectable chemists, under the name of calcined magnesia; but whether the preparation is from Messrs. Henry's, the Hall, or other manufacturing chemists, the mischievous and dreadful effects it may produce on the human frame, by its indiscriminate and injudicious use, are none the less certain. What are these effects? I will endeavour to explain them.

Magnesia is, when deprived of its carbonic acid by calcination, a pure alkaline earth; it is received into the stomach, and coming in contact with its contents, a mutual affinity takes place between it, the magnesia, and the peculiar acid contained in the stomach, precisely similar to the action of the chalk or carbonate of soda. The gastric or stomach acid, as in the other case, unites with as much of the magnesia as is sufficient to saturate or correct it; the remaining portion is left in the stomach in its natural state, mixed but not united with whatever else it may find there; and people who give themselves the trouble to think of any thing beyond the immediate relief they have obtained, may probably suppose that it shares the fate of, and pursues the same course through the alimentary canal, as this said "whatever else" does. I have said above it remains perfectly unchanged—it does so; it will sometimes pass off by the bowels with the solids, but still unchanged:

when it does this it is all very well; but it sometimes is taken up by the fluids and passes with them into the bladder; mind *into*, not *off by*, the bladder, for more or less of it will always remain, and here the probable mischief begins. What does remain deposits itself there, forms gravel, and very possibly, by a constant repetition of its use, the nucleus or groundwork of stone. Let any one in the habit of taking magnesia observe his urine,* it will always be more or less turbid, and accompanied with settlement: many a one does observe this, and charges it upon the other complaints he may be suffering under: sometimes he will doubtless be right; but let him leave his favourite, "a little simple magnesia," (most villainous simplicity by the way,) and he will most frequently find that the unnatural appearance

* It is not a very long time since a practitioner, who attempted to draw indications from the appearance of the urine, was set down as a *Quack*. I remember in my days of early pupilage, several of them in the neighbourhood of the town, at which I began my medical education, who were then termed "water doctors," and were held in most sovereign contempt by the regulars of the country. This however is not the case now, for the changes that occur in the urine, in many if not all constitutional derangements, are very great, and offer such field for judging of the disorder that hardly any practitioner of the present day, would omit an examination of that fluid.

induced by the "simple friend" will be succeeded by a healthy brightness and clearness; and though, in reading this, he may have laughed at it as "chimerical and bug-bearish," let him try the experiment, and if it should not produce results similar to those I have predicted, he may be assured he is trifling with himself; that his derangement of health is more general than he has imagined, and the next thing I should recommend him to take, is *advice*, and that, not from any book he may have by him, whatever may be its imposing title, but from some medical adviser, on whose judgment he can rely; pay him his fee,* don't forget that, get his prescription made up at some chemist's who has a "character to lose," as regards his accuracy in dispensing:

* A plan of medical reform has been some time talked of, which shall separate the medical world into two distinct classes, the prescriber and the compounder of the medicines: such is the case all over the Continent. The objection with patients to this plan may be, the having to pay a fee for advice; but the high fees of the present day must be lowered—a professional man much sought after will always get the best fees; but, as a general rule, I am of opinion that patients who come to your house should not be taxed with more than five shillings as a fee, and at their own houses, or by letter, ten. This would enable a man to live by his profession, without interfering with Pharmacy.

take the medicine regularly, and follow the advice given for general conduct: let him do this, and he will soon come round, and have saved himself from the chance of contracting that dreadful disease, the stone; a disease well known, both as to the sufferings produced while it is forming, and the tremendous operation required for its extraction.

I may here be allowed a remark as to the folly of giving children (infants I mean,) magnesia, simply because it is "tasteless;" it entails upon them of course a chance of the same mischief as it would upon an adult. The jalap powder, united with a little carbonate of soda, would be an equally efficacious corrector of the acid which generally abounds in the stomach of infants, and an opener of the bowels. The first of these articles, where acid does not exist, assisted with a little cream of tartar, forms a most excellent aperient for children generally.

STIMULANTS.

The next palliative is called in where the patient is extremely uncomfortable after eating, from an oppressive sense of fulness; and strong stimulants are usually resorted to, as before mentioned. I cannot bring any serious charge of secondary mischief against these allies; indeed the single

one of perpetuating what they are called in to relieve is quite enough for them to bear.

COSTIVENESS.

We now come to constipation of the bowels, or costiveness, in which I have said, aloetic purgatives are usually resorted to. I think if I say that almost all "antibilious and aperient pills" sold in the shops contain aloes, I shall not be wrong; compound extract of colocynth figures in the composition of most of them, and this extract contains a considerable portion of aloes.

It is a remarkable fact, that there are particular medicines which exercise their influence on particular parts of the human frame; for instance, Prussic acid and Digitalis act immediately upon the heart, and reduce the pulse; belladonna acts on the pupil of the eye; the ergot of rye and others might be mentioned, of a similar tendency. Aloes is one of these local disturbers; and the constant use of it, as a purgative, induces in most habits that disagreeable and teasing disease, piles; a disease which once produced, seldom quits the patient, but constantly recurs at different periods; and though eventually, by proper treatment, he may recover the regular action of his bowels, yet he has by his palliative system raised up another enemy, which will last his life-time.

THESE REMEDIES ONLY BAD BY THEIR ABUSE.

In all I have said above, respecting alkaline Salts, Chalk, Magnesia, and Aloes, I wish to be distinctly understood that I allude to the constant and injudiciously-continued use of them; they are in themselves, when properly timed, excellent remedies, but it is by their constant use, as palliatives, that they become productive of so much and such extensive and serious mischief.

CHAPTER IV.

I would now, having shown many things that ought not to be done, in cases of derangement of the bilious or digestive organs, endeavour to convey, in as clear and concise terms as I am master of, what I have found in my own practice, and have seen in the most extended practice of others to produce, (the patient himself putting his shoulder to the wheel,) the most beneficial results, by the use of,

MEDICINE,

DIET,

AND EXERCISE.

On the proper selection of the first; the arrangement of, combined with due attention to

the second; and the necessary and gradually-increasing use of the third, will the eventual and perfect cure depend.

FIRST, AS TO THE MEDICINE.

I cannot undertake to say what medicine is advisable in individual cases, not being possessor of the secret of the golden elixir; more particularly as the sufferer has, in all probability, been dosing himself with all sorts of nostrums for a long time, till he has exhausted his own patience, and got into such a state that he is frightened at the consequences of his own folly.

SUPPOSED EXTREME CASE.

I will suppose him with his digestive organs utterly incapable of performing their functions, his bowels by turns much relaxed or obstinately constipated, with all the minor accompaniments of head-ache, nausea, pains in the head and shoulders, &c. &c.

If he came to me, I should say, "Now sir, you have, after some months' hard labour, and by a disagreeable process, got yourself into a state that will of course require some time to get out of; and unless you can make up your mind to persevere, it is useless my attempting to cure you, as my remedies will have no eventual good effect if you do not attend to general directions."

TREATMENT REQUIRED.

Taking for granted, however, that whoever reads this, and is suffering under any of the above symptoms, is willing to try at any rate to get cured, I would say, that the medical treatment required, is to endeavour gradually to remove obstructions, to stimulate the sluggish action of those organs which do not perform their functions properly, and to give general tone or strength by such tonic medicines as may best agree with the constitution of the patient.

WARM INJECTIONS.

The first end may generally be obtained by warm injections, repeated till the lower bowels are perfectly freed from any lodgment or indurated substance, assisted by vegetable or saline purgatives; and if the patient can bear it, a gentle emetic or two will be of great assistance at starting, to excite the action of the torpid organs. In this case it is generally the liver that is the greatest idler.

BLUE PILL.

I cannot refer to a better authority than the late Mr. Abernethy, who first discovered that the blue pill had the peculiar power of stimulating that organ into action. I would not recommend more than two pills a week at first, and gradually reduce this dose as the cure proceeded, and

proceed it will, in the great majority of cases, if the patient will but persevere.

CURE.

We have thus far palliated the symptoms: now then to perfect the cure, I would recommend some vegetable tonic combined with a saline aperient, in such proportion as to prevent the tonic locking up the bowels, without being sufficient to act as a purgative: almost all tonics are astringents, and require this corrective.

This must be persisted in for some time, perhaps two or three months; the quantity of saline aperient required must be regulated entirely by the action on the bowels, which should never exceed two motions daily, or be less than one: the patient will soon learn to regulate this himself.

QUASSIA.

The tonic I have seen produce the greatest benefit in these cases is Quassia, of which an infusion may be made very readily, and a due portion of Epsom salts added: but Quassia is not an article to be played with, simple as some persons may fancy it; if taken in over-doses it excites the stomach too powerfully, and the head will become affected; and it is in these niceties that the skill of a medical adviser is necessary at the commencement of the treatment. The stomach must be led gently, not furiously driven

into action, nature must be only *assisted*, not *forced*; and thus gradually brought up to its original healthy state. This again is another instance where persons treat their own case so injudiciously, by using remedies in themselves excellent, without a due regard to the proper management of these remedies, as acting on their peculiar temperament and constitutional habits and feelings. I, therefore, though strongly recommending Quassia as the best tonic I know in these cases, must accompany that recommendation with another, that from time to time, as the cure progresses, if the slightest inconvenience arises in the head or stomach, to have immediate recourse to your medical adviser, who will at once judge whether the dose may be increased or diminished.

INTENDED ACTION OF REMEDY.

The object of this medicine is to give, by means of the Quassia, tone or strength to the system, in the most gradual manner possible; and to correct, by the saline aperient united with it, any tendency of this powerful bitter to act as an astringent on the bowels. It may, probably, be at first necessary to have recourse to some more active aperient; but the patient will soon learn, at the end of a week, or ten days at farthest, how to manage his medicine so as to obviate the necessity of

recurring to it ; as he can always add a larger proportion of the saline aperient to the infusion of Quassia. I have generally found the following proportions answer the purpose :—

Take,—Quassia Shavings, Two Scruples,

Boiling Water, half a pint.

Let them stand together for three hours ; strain, and add—

Epsom salts, half an ounce.—

Dissolve them perfectly.

The dose is two table-spoonfuls twice a day ; an hour before breakfast, and an hour before dinner. There is one ingredient necessary to the perfection of the cure which I have alluded to before, not contained in any part of the *Materia Medica* ; but without which, few prescriptions would be of much service ; and I should recommend more attention to be paid to the quality of this ingredient than the other ; it is perseverance : a due proportion, joined with the other treatment, will in a great majority of cases complete a cure.

CHAPTER V.

ADVICE.

I have impressed, in a former part of this little treatise, or at least endeavoured to do so, on the minds of continual sufferers from biliary de-

rangement of any kind, or however slight, provided they are either permanent or frequently recurring. I have said get advice: I have also said, if not in words in meaning, "mind what advice you get." In a place like London there is no excuse persons can make to themselves or their families, for not getting the best advice. The population is so extensive that it affords sufficient patients, under every sort of disease, to induce a medical practitioner to turn his attention to some peculiar one; and by directing all his abilities to that channel, he must, of course, become more efficient than his brethren, who are either engaged in some other line of practice, or who, as more general practitioners, run against this particular disease only in the cursory manner they may chance to meet with it in their daily visits or visitors. Thus a man who is deaf would naturally, in London at any rate, seek out an aurist: and there are other men of eminence who, having studied and afterwards written on particular diseases or derangements of structure, may be fairly supposed to be more "*au fait*" at treating these than others. The poorest persons can always get at this sort of advice, for almost all the leading men in London are attached to some hospital or dispensary.

The late Mr. Abernethy, so celebrated in his day, was Surgeon to St. Bartholomew's, I believe,

till his death, or very near to it. In Cork Street, Bond Street, the most celebrated oculist of his time may be consulted gratuitously daily, up to a certain hour, and medicines are also supplied, gratis. Not far off, in Dean Street, is a dispensary for diseases of the ear, conducted with great skill by gentlemen who have devoted themselves to that branch of the profession; and the greatest authority we have on skin diseases, is attached to the St. Pancras Infirmary. It may be said, what does all this lead to? I will tell you what I want it to lead to; it is to induce persons suffering under any peculiar derangement, whether liver or anything else, to apply at once to some practitioner who has obtained a reputation in that particular line of practice: his own medical attendant will always inform him where such a man is to be found. I speak here as judging of that liberality which should always guide a practitioner in endeavouring to *cure* his patient; and if he finds a puzzling case, gladly to avail himself of a second opinion. Let me not be thought to have wished to undervalue the abilities of "general practitioners;" such an idea is the most distant from my intention. There are gentlemen practising in distant and out of the way parts of the country, who are a credit and honour to the profession, and who, many of them, from long

experience in army or navy, have had opportunities of becoming eminently skilful operators, a qualification by no means general, but in the country highly necessary. The great variety of cases which come before them, must enable these gentlemen, if possessing only moderate abilities, to form a very accurate judgment on the causes and nature of the diseases they meet with: but I am sure there is not one who would be offended if a patient that required couching should say he preferred going to an oculist for the performance of the operation.

HOW TO STATE YOUR CASE.

Having arrived at the house of the gentleman, be previously prepared to state your symptoms clearly and explicitly; and if you doubt your memory or your nerves, have a sort of note paper to which you can refer. Do not expect him to find out your symptoms, though it will frequently occur that he could do so, after you have told him two or three of the most prominent ones. If he should happen to say, "Do you not feel so and so"—take care not to fancy a "So and so" feel to oblige him. Leading questions of this kind very often produce an accommodating kind of an answer, and if the patient be at all nervous and alarmed, he will have every sensation that he is questioned upon. Describe clearly your own

case, and do not wait for his question : recollect that his time is generally precious, and be as concise as possible, but not unnecessarily so, or in a hurry; give him a true account of your mode of living, occupation, previous habits and customs. and what you have done since you felt the present inconvenience: if you should be a free liver, do not disguise this fact; much mischief often occurs from a patient misleading or concealing circumstances from a medical adviser. Can any thing in the world be more foolish?—we work then not only in the dark, for we might by chance stumble on the road: but in apparently broad day-light are led aside from the right treatment, and driven into one directly contrary; I had a case of this kind through my hands some time since.

**CASE OF ERRONEOUS TREATMENT CAUSED BY
CONCEALMENT.**

By the by, it may be said I am fond of cases; I have excellent authority for being so, namely, the late Mr. Abernethy, who says, “I always like cases, and I like them because I consider they impress the mind more fully than mere words;” so to my case:—

A lady complained to me she was suffering under great debility; that when she got up in the morning she could scarcely stand, her legs

trembled so under her, that she had very queer sensations in the heart, and altogether she was totally unhinged; her occupation compelled her to take an active part in her domestic affairs, and that this, which was once her pleasure, had become a complete labour; her pulse was low, and I found her digestive organs were, and long had been somewhat, but not very much, out of order, with no appetite. It appeared to me to be a case of nervous debility, originally caused by some mental suffering, of which she had much; and that derangement of the stomach, and the said debility, were dependent on one another. I questioned her as to her habits, which she reported as perfectly regular, and I treated the case imagining it to be as I have stated above. I prescribed what had usually been successful with my patients, and gave her assurances of speedy relief; I dined frequently at the same table with her, and she appeared to follow my directions pretty closely; she got her appetite, but did not get rid of the nervous debility. I suggested a little better living, a glass or two of wine after dinner, and so on: still no better. I at length said I thought she had better consult her old medical attendant, who would know her constitution better than I did; she took my advice, and to my astonishment he ordered her to live upon toast and water; I

thought there must have been some gross error on my part, or deception on her's,—but what I could not guess; a short time however brought out the mystery: her morning debility was caused by too much hilarity in the evening; the said hilarity, or rather the cause of it, beginning about twelve o'clock in the day, and increasing till bed time; so that what I had been treating as nervous debility, was nothing more or less than the natural morning consequences of nightly excess. She relished my advice of living a little better amazingly, and I believe, after all, paid a great deal more attention to it than she did to the doctrine of toast and water.

This is one of the cases where a practitioner gets into most unmerited discredit, without any real blame attachable to him; he is deceived by the statement of the patient, who fails in being cured, as a client oftentimes loses a trial from not having explained to his solicitor the worst part of his case, but concealing that from him which coming out on the other side totally unexpected, he is compelled to abandon the cause.

Be convinced then of the actual, the urgent necessity of stating the whole, not only of your symptoms, but of your daily habits: if you get tipsy every night do not conceal it; your medical adviser will not *totally* deprive you of this “de-

licious enjoyment ;” as to cut off the supplies altogether would be too great a change ; he will still allow some little consolation, but of course will advise you to leave off excesses : but more on this head when we come to actual diet.

I have no doubt that nine-tenths of the cases unsuccessfully treated, are owing to mis-statement or concealment, followed up by non-observance of the advice you have received, and then you blame the medical adviser, and trot off to another to serve him and yourself in the same way : after all, however, we need not find fault, for though no individual can hold you long, to the mass of the profession you are a most profitable class of patients ; and I am afraid that all my good advice, for it is good, and that you yourselves will I am sure admit, will be thrown away upon you.

There are many cases that patients may describe by letter clearly, and thus enable a professional man to prescribe for them where it may be inconvenient to visit or be visited by the medical adviser. In addition to such a description of the peculiar symptoms under which the patient suffers ; the following particulars will be desirable.

The state of the bowels—whether relaxed or otherwise, the nature and colour of the motions and if attended with pain ; and also the state and colour of the urine.

If suffering under any pain, constantly or at times only, and whether that pain is *cutting*, or dull and heavy.

If at times he has shiverings, cold feet, or perspirations by night or day.

If the tongue is discoloured, and if so, what colour it is; what are his sensations after a meal, and what solid or fluid causes him most inconvenience after partaking of it; and what are his usual habits as to eating, drinking, and exercise.

The state of his pulse as to the number of vibrations, or strokes in a minute, which he may easily count; whether his constitution is naturally strong or weak; and whether his natural complexion is florid or pallid—in plain terms, whether he is red faced or pale.

Whether he is subject to any particular disorders, such as gout, rheumatism, or any other.

Should the patient be a lady, there are some other explanations necessary which will readily occur to her.

The above directions are quite sufficient to form a consultation by letter.

CHAPTER VI.

The next thing I would press upon the observation of the patient is

DIET.

I do not know a wider field for difference of opinion than this article. It is highly amusing to sit at table with a numerous party, and if any one should happen to broach the subject, hear them descant upon the wholesomes; and, as Evelyn says in his diary,—“mighty pleasant” to be known as a medical man, whether practitioner or not, on such an occasion. You refuse something or other, and ten to one but somebody will say, “I suppose you abstain from that, thinking it *unwholesome*;” as if a man were obliged to eat every thing, to prove he had no bad opinion of it, and become, as it were, a sort of general “taster” to the company, owing to his having been brought up to the Medical Profession. If any professional man should ever read this, I am sure he will readily recognize a position in which he has found himself more than once. Then, again, their observations to one another as to the impropriety of mixing this and that together, and from men

too who, before the subject was started, had been swallowing the most heterogeneous solids and fluids possible.

STUDYING THE WHOLESOMES.

Notwithstanding this remark, I am a decided ridiculer of the general observation of "studying the wholesomes," any further than avoiding whatever tends to discomfort after eating. Many books have been, and many more doubtless will be, written on diet; but they all contain general directions, and, like most books of general information, seldom contain that particular idea that one stands in need of. A man in good health, who dreads this thing or that thing, and who makes a study of "what to eat, what to drink, and what to avoid," under the fear of its not being wholesome, is, I think, very unwise; such a man may usually eat and drink any thing, provided he does it in moderation. Of course excess is unwholesome to the most healthy. Abstinence, in this case, would be like refusing to be comfortable lest one might *possibly*, I do not say *probably*, be uncomfortable afterwards—refusing a certain good on the prospect of an uncertain evil—declining a delightful excursion on a fine summer's day, lest rain should come on, the carriage overturn, the boat upset, or some such possible

mishap occur. No, no ! the man in robust health may enjoy himself, if he steer clear of excess.

The moment, however, he actually does find himself out of order, let him at once attend to it, and set seriously about considering his diet ; let him consider well what it is that produces the greatest discomfort to him after having eaten or drunk it ; let him consider its quantity and quality, and let his own judgment guide him to desist from it, while adopting those medical remedies necessary to his cure. No medical adviser can give so good directions as to diet, as may be communicated to a patient by the hints of his own sensations after eating. Do we not see an immense difference in the appetites we meet with daily ? How much more will some men require to intoxicate them than others ? The proverb of "One man may steal a horse while another may not look over the stable door," is particularly applicable to the stomachs of different men. How, then, is it possible to be certain in our general directions ? I believe the nearest ones we can come to, which are generally applicable, are to abstain from every thing that disagrees with us. I will endeavour, nevertheless, to suggest a few hints to those suffering from indigestion. Eat as little of any farinaceous food as possible. Among this class of food I rank bread, potatoes, beans, pease,

&c.; avoid fermented liquors—viz. beer, sweet wines, &c., more particularly these which are bottled, and contain a superabundance of fixed air. It is the generation of this air in the stomach, by the decomposition of what we have taken, which causes the oppressive sense of fulness and distension afterwards. I do not know what further directions to give as to what is to be avoided in the eating way. As to what may be said on the drinking side of the question, avoid slops, such as tea, coffee, &c. They only dilute, and consequently weaken the gastric juice, and prevent its full action on the food at a time when all its force, comparatively, is weakness itself; and, as a general rule, drink as little as possible.

WHAT TO EAT AND DRINK.

Now, as to what *may* be eat and drunk, this secret lies in a nutshell. Eat nothing that is useless; but let all you take be of the most nutritious food possible, viz. solid meat. Instead of bread and butter, toast or tea, at breakfast, take a mutton chop, or rump steak, lightly cooked, with the smallest possible piece of biscuit—none at all would be better—and a glass or two, not more, of sherry wine, or a little weak brandy and water—one part brandy to six of water. At dinner roast beef or mutton; if you eat vegetables at all.

let it be greens. I have known these objected to—I think erroneously; but I leave this for the stomach of the patient to decide. The drink to be the same as at breakfast. It will be found queer stuff at first, this said brandy and water; but be assured, after a day or two of perseverance, instead of tasting like water out of a dirty brandy glass, it will become very pleasant to the palate; indeed I know not a more seductive mixture than weak brandy and water.

BRANDY IN ENGLAND NOT GOOD.

The brandy usually sold in England is so full of colouring matter, viz. burnt sugar, that it is not by any means what could be wished for in these cases. However, there is a brandy distilled in London, and sold at a moderate price, which I have myself tested, and found to approach very closely to the French Cognac, as drank in France. The supper (no tea, mind) may be taken of cold *meat*;—meat is the order of the day—no “little bits of chicken,” veal, or lamb—nothing but beef, or mutton, or game. After every meal sit quiet, or lie down and take a nap. What—indulge in sleep after eating? Verily so. Nature points out to all carnivorous animals to sleep after eating; and it is downright nonsense to urge that it is unwholesome. Let me assure you, when the

digestive organs are out of order, the sleep you get after eating will be but little; but as they come round you will find you enjoy your repose, and rise refreshed and as light as a feather. Yes, yes, take your nap after dinner, and go to bed as soon after supper as you like. So much, then, for Medicine and Diet.

CHAPTER VII.

EXERCISE.

This, though last, is by no means the least worthy of consideration in the progress of cure in these cases. The general directions may be made very concise:—take as much as you can at three different periods of the day—that is, before breakfast, dinner, and supper, without tiring yourself: this must be strenuously avoided. The open air is, of course, preferable; but if the weather be unfavourable, this is not to deprive you of your exercise. Put on your hat, cloak, &c., open your windows, and walk up and down your sitting room; this will answer the purpose very well. Of course you will naturally take care

to shut the door, so as not to have a thorough draft of air through the room: for the same reason do not stop in your walk and stand over the fire—but walk regularly till you find symptoms of fatigue; shut your windows, take off your hat, &c., and sit down quietly to rest. Out of doors horse exercise is recommended—but there is nothing so good, in my opinion, as walking; and this is in every body's power.

I have now endeavoured to explain myself as to the mode of cure I have found successful, and described the three divisions of Medicine, Diet, and Exercise.

PERSEVERANCE AND SUMMARY.

After all, there are, as the French minister, Richelieu, said of war, three things necessary to perfect the cure—first, perseverance—second, perseverance—and third, perseverance. And in the worst case, the regimen is not so very sharp; indeed, compared with the end in view, it is as nothing—a little bitter medicine to swallow twice a day, accompanied at first with an occasional blue pill for, say at the outside, three months; a diet for the same time, as laid down, to consist solely of lightly cooked meat or game, and weak brandy and water, or sherry wine—and exercise of three pleasant walks daily for the same period.

Really a very reasonable mode of getting rid of one of the most troublesome and inconvenient diseases or derangements we have to encounter. But, however disagreeable it may prove—however the “*toujours perdrix*” diet, or the same regularity of exercise may annoy, look at the end—perfect restoration of health; and when this is achieved, and it will be in nine cases out of ten, with what pleasure will the patient sit down to enjoy the reward of his perseverance, when, at his usual meals, he can relish his old favourite dishes and wines, rendered now doubly sweet by his late abstinence. I think I observe him taking a good draught of any liquid, and afterwards drawing a long breath of satisfaction. I should like to have seen him try to do this two months previously; he would have had a pretty considerable twitch under his right ribs. But now he may eat, drink, ride, run, walk, any thing, and again throw the wholesomes overboard; then will he feel grateful to his medical attendant, who has, perhaps, had some difficulty to keep him up to the perseverance necessary for the cure—and he will find he has taken a new lease of his life, and that lease with the tenement in excellent repair. Who would not, having been suffering in this way, do every thing to return to such an enjoyment.

I have been, up to this period, endeavouring to

show the folly of palliation, and I hope successfully. I have related some strong cases, which I have myself witnessed, where the mischief was clearly traceable to this source—palliation. I have pointed out several particular remedies that, by injudicious use, produce serious effects; and I have selected them because I was of opinion that they were more resorted to than others. It will, however, be thought very odd, perhaps, that I should altogether have omitted to mention a medicine which has been productive of more good and more mischief, and been the subject of more abuse and more praise, than any other known. The reader will readily anticipate that I allude to

CALOMEL.

The main cause of this omission is, that in cases of biliary derangement, my humble opinion is that it is not at all necessary—the blue pill answering the same end as an aperient, when followed up by a vegetable or saline carthartic, and having the advantage of acting more directly as a stimulant on the liver. When calomel was first introduced, the dose was from twenty to thirty grains; in India it is still given in immense quantities. If I were to mention doses I have known administered, I should scarcely be be-

lieved. In England we have now got to the other extreme, and very minute doses are advocated by some medical practitioners, to produce effects for which ten grains have been thought requisite. The dose, for many years, as an aperient, in conjunction with others, has, up to this time, been from three to six grains. It strikes me that, with all this difference of opinion, one thing is pretty evident—that there is something yet to be learned in the true management of calomel as a continuous medicine. I am, therefore, disposed to think that, in cases of biliary derangement, it is better let alone altogether. Very few medical men will prescribe it, but patients themselves resort to it; and it is this which induces me to say I think they had better let it alone. I have seen one or two very lamentable cases of the effect of this medicine on the nerves by long-continued use, in a sluggish action of the digestive organs, which had been accompanied by uneasiness of mind.

**MELANCHOLY CASE WHERE CALOMEL WAS
USED.**

One case in particular do I well remember, some years since, where the unfortunate patient was treated with calomel for three or four months,

gradually getting worse ; the same treatment was continued, and he became so highly what is called nervous, that a book laid down quietly on a table would make him jump from his chair ; and he at length died from his own hands. I was young at the time, but I saw (silently) the treatment he underwent—and the more I have thought of his end, and I have often thought of it, I have been the more inclined to the opinion, that one half of the mischief was owing to the calomel—this, too, when administered by a medical man. How much more, then, is to be feared when patients venture to attempt such a system of treatment on themselves, either by having their own receipts made up at the chemists, or else resorting to the numberless antibilious pills which are puffed off in every journal we take up, as “most infallible remedies.” They almost all, I may venture to say, contain calomel, united with aloes ; and thus they go on throwing a “medicine, of which they know little, into a body of which they know less.” These “popular remedies, or quack medicines,” are productive of most immense mischief to those who take them ; indeed about as much in proportion as they are productive of good to those who sell them. It is, I think, a great pity that a committee is not appointed by Government, of medical men, who should have a power of inspecting the

receipts by which these preparations are made, ascertaining whether they are likely to produce their professed intention, that there is nothing injurious to the constitution in their composition, and either allow or prevent their sale, according to the conclusions at which they may arrive. This is the case in France; the committee are appointed by the faculty of medicine, and sworn to secrecy as to the recipes laid before them not being communicated to the public; thus affording a chance in favour of public health, by the prevention of the possibility of men, who never studied medicine in any of its branches, palming "villainous drugs" upon the credulous part of the community, to the frequent injury of the constitution, and occasional hazard of life.

I will now conclude, with a hope that what I have written may induce some of the patients, who may recognize their cases in my description, to abandon the erroneous system of palliation, and at once summon up resolution, self-denial, and perseverance, to go through the treatment for obtaining a radical cure, and they will be amply rewarded for it by the return of health. I have been endeavouring, till now, to induce invalids to take medicine—that is, proper medicine. I will here offer a word of parting advice to those in health; and that is, never to take medicine at

all—never make yourself ill, for fear you should be so. I am sure this counsel will be relished. Remember the tombstone over a victim to this folly, which says,—

“ I was well, wanted to be better,
Took physic, and here I am,”

—and be content to let well alone.

